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Exploration of Academic Information Seeking and Library Use of the Blind and Visually Impaired Students in University of Malaya, Malaysia

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1. Background / Objectives and Goals

This article reports on an investigation of the information seeking behavior of blind and visually impaired students. It investigated whether the services provided by the University of Malaya Library (hereafter UML) accommodated the information seeking behavior of blind students and those with visual impairments.

2. Methods

The students were surveyed by means of a semi-structured interview where they were asked what their information needs were, how they met and whether the information they found from library system met their needs or not. The Librarians and the Counseling Unit Officers were surveyed by means of self-administered questionnaires where they were asked to specify their length of services, the frequency with which they assisted students with visual impairments and the students with visual impairments sources and formats.

3. Expected Results / Conclusion / Contribution

Recommendations include developing a strategy to implement the UML disability policy and allocating a sufficient budget for the purchase of assistive devices or, preferably, incorporating principles of universal design in the information system.

Keywords: Blind and visually impaired students, information seeking behavior, academic library use.